

Message Text

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PAGE 01 FRANKF 06529 301604Z
ACTION SY-05

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SYE-00 /018 W
-----114944 301642Z /43

P R 301519Z AUG 77
FM AMCONSUL FRANKFURT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9199
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY VIENNA

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STATE FOR SY/OPS/T AND SY/OPS/FO

BONN AND VIENNA FOR RSOS FROM OIC/RTC

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ASEC
SUBJECT: MERCEDES ARMORED VEHICLE

REF (A) STATE 186038, (B) STATE 176379, (C) STATE 163874

1. AS REQUESTED IN REFTEL (A) RSO BONN, SCHWARTZ AND
OIC/RTC, DOIG VISITED THE DAIMLER-BNZ FACTORY IN
STUTTGART ON 29 AUG 77 AND DISCUSSED MERCEDES "BULLET
PROTECTION" PROGRAM WITH FACOTRY TECHNICAL PERSONNEL.
FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSIONS.

2. DAIMLER-BENZ IS MODIFYING A LIMITED NUMBER, APPROX
30 PER YEAR, OF DIFFERENT MODEL MERCEDES ON ESSENTIALLY
A HAND-MADE CUSTOMIZED BASIS. THE STEEL ALLOY AND
LAMINATED GLASS USED BY DAIMLER-BENZ FOR BULLET PROTECTION
IS INSTALLED DURING MANUFACTURE. THEY STATED THATER
ARE DIFFERENT LEVELS OF PROTECTION AVAILABLE SUCH AS
PROTECTION OF ENTIRE CAR, NO PROTECTION FOR DRIVER, NO
PROTECTION IN ROOF, SPECIAL PROTECTION IN FLOOR, ETC.

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BASICALLY THEY PROTECT THEIR CARS BASED ON CUSTOMER
WISHES WITHIN DAIMLER-BENZ WEIGHT-PERFORMANCE LIMITA-
TIONS. THEIR TECHNICAL PERSONNEL FREELY ADMIT THERE
ARE LIMITATIONS TO THE AMOUNT OF PROTECTION WHICH CAN
BE PROVIDED. FROM MERCEDES VEIWPOINT ONE PRIMARY
BULLET PROTECTION CRITERIA IS THAT THE PROTECTED CARE
LOOK NO DIFFERENT FROM THE UNPROTECTED CAR TO THE UN-

TRAINED EYE. BECAUSE OF THIS, WEIGHT -PERFORMANCE LIMITATIONS PLAY A CONSIDERABLE ROLE IN THEIR PROTECTION PROGRAM AND AS A RESULT, MERCEDES PRESENTLY CAN ONLY PROTECT THEIR MODELS 350SE, 350SEL (LONGER WHEELBASE, SAME CAR OTHERWISE) AND 600. THEY STATED THE PROTECTION IN THE MODEL 600 IS NOT AS GOOD AS THE 350SE AND SEL MODELS. NONE OF THE ABOVE PROTECTED MODELS ARE AVAILABLE FOR THE AMERICAN MARKET SINCE THEY WILL NOT MEET U.S. EMISSIONS STANDARDS.

3. DAIMLER-BENZ USES A 28 MM THICKNESS TRANSPARENT ARMOR (LAMINATED GLASS) ON ALL WINDOWS IN THEIR PROTECTED CARS. THEY CLAIM THEY HAVE NOT HAD ANY PROBLEMS WITH THE LAMINATION SEPARATING AND EXPERIENCE VERY FEW DISTORTION PROBLEMS. THEY USE 3.5 MM STEEL ALLOY ARMOR IN THE HEADLINER, DOOR PANELS, WHEEL HOUSINGS, AND BEHIND REAR SEAT. THE SAME STEEL ALLOY, 2.25 MM IN THICKNESS, IS INSTALLED AROUND THE FUEL TANK (MOUNTED DIRECTLY BEHIND REAR PASSENGER SEAT) AND IN THE FLOOR AND FRONT FIREWALL PANELS.

WHEN INSTALLED ON A MERCEDES MODEL 350SE OR SEL, THE TOTAL PROTECTION PACKAGE ADDS 450 KG TO THE STANDARD WEIGHT OF THE CAR. THE TOTAL WEIGHT OF THE TRANSPARENT ARMOR IS 180KG (APPROX 12 LB PER SQ. FT.) AND THE COMBINED WEIGHT OF THE 3.5 MM AND 2.25 MM STEEL ALLOY IS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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270 KG. THE 3.5 MM STEEL ALLOY WEIGHS APPROX 30 KG PER SQ. METER (APPROX 61 LB PER SQ. FT.). DAIMLER-BENZ REPRESENTATIVES STATED THAT BOTH THE TRANSPARENT AND OPAQUE ARMORING MATERIAL ARE SUPPLIED FROM OTHER MANUFACTURERS BUT WERE UNWILLING TO DIVULGE THE MANUFACTURERS' IDENTITIES OR SELL SAMPLES OF THE MATERIALS FOR FORWARDING TO SY HEADQUARTERS. THEY DID STATE THEY WOULD ENCOURAGE THE PARTICIPATION OF "EXPERTS FROM WASHINGTON" IN CONDUCTING ADDITIONAL PENETRATION TESTING OF THE MATERIALS.

4. DAIMLER-BENZ REPRESENTATIVES STATED THEY HAVE NOT FOUND AN ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION FOR PROTECTION OF CAR TIRES AT THIS TIME. THEY HAVE INVESTIGATED SEVERAL TIRES MANUFACTURED FOR THAT SPECIFIC PURPOSE, HOWEVER, HAVE NOT FOUND ANY WHICH SATISFY THEIR STANDARDS. AT PRESENT THEY RECOMMEND AND CLAIM THEIR PROTECTED CARS CAN BE DRIVEN ON THE TIRE RIMS, SHOULD THE TIRES BE SHOT OUT, UP TO 180 KPH.

5. ACCORDING TO TEST CONDUCTED BY THE GERMAN POLICE, DAIMLER-BENZ GUARANTEES THE FOLLOWING DEFAT DAPA-

BILITIES FOR THE TRANSPARENT AND OPAQUE ARMOR USED IN IN
THEIR PROGRAM. FOR 28 MM LAMINATED GLASS AND 3.5 MM
STEEL ALLOY THEY:

(A) GUARANTEE PROTECTION AGAINST ALL KNOWN KINDS
OF REVOLVERS AND PISTOLS UP TO 11 (44 MAG.)
TESTS WERE CONDUCTED AT APPROX 3-5 METERS DIS-
TANCE WITH REPEATED HITS WITHIN A 5-10 CM AREA.
FIRED ROUNDS DID PENETRATE OR CAUSE SPLINTERING
OF GLASS ON INSIDE USING ALL KNOWN TYPES OF AMMUNITION.

(B) GUARANTEE COMPLETE PROTECTION AGAINST MACHINE
PISTOLS SUCH AS CONVENTIONAL NATO MP-5 9 MM,
UZI 9MM, HECKLER&KOCH (.0-5) 9 MM AND THE
HECKLER & KOCH 53 (5.56 MM) UNDER SAME TEST
CONDITIONS LISTED ABOVE.
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(C) THEY STATED THE GLASS WILL WITHSTAND MULTIPLE
HITS BY AK-47, M-16 AND AR-15 EVEN USING
ARMOR PIERCING BULLETS HOWEVER 3.5 MM STEEL
WILL NOT.

(D) RIFLES SUCH AS NATO G-3 AND AMERICAN GARRAND
M-1 WILL PENETRATE BOTH THE GLASS AND STEEL
ALLOY UNDER SIMILAR TEST CONDITIONS.

6. THE LAST SUBJECT DISCUSSED WAS PRICE FOR A
"BULLET PROTECTED" CAR SUPPLIED BY DAIMLER-BENZ.
THE PRICE IS DM200,000 (SPPROX \$87,000) OVER THE
BASE PRICE OF THE CAR. IN THE CASE OF A MERCEDES
350SE OR 350SEL THE BASE PRICE IS BETWEEN DM 36,000
AND DM39,000. THAT PUTS THE TOTAL PRICE TAG FOR A
"BULLET RESISTANT" MERCEDES MODEL 350 SE AT JUST OVER
\$100,000.00. DELIVERY TIME IS APPROXIMATELY EIGHT
MONTHS WITH PICKUP AT MERCEDES'S SINDEL-FINGEN PLANT.
HOW MAY SHOULD WE ORDER?.LEHMANN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 30-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977FRANKF06529
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770313-0546
Format: TEL
From: FRANKFURT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770810/aaaaahns.tel
Line Count: 154
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: bea18c4e-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SY
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 STATE 186038, 77 STATE 176379, 77 STATE 163874
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 19-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1396121
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MERCEDES ARMORED VEHICLE
TAGS: ASEC
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbs://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/bea18c4e-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009